

**OBITUARY**  
**A TRIBUTE TO TED SPILMAN**



Theodore James Spilman  
(1925-1996)

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All who knew Theodore James Spilman will remember his earnest and varied interests in many subjects, from U.S. presidents to music, in addition to his thorough command of all things entomological. Ted was fascinated by the lives of entomologists as much as by entomology itself. As a devoted member of the Entomological Society of Washington, serving over the years in several offices including President, he had an unofficial role as the Society's historian. On the occasion of the one-thousandth meeting of the ESW in February 1995, he told stories of the early meetings and formation of the ESW, complete with century-old "gossip" and detailed knowledge of the lives of some founding members, leaving those of us present wanting to hear much more. This was however to be Ted's last address to the membership, as an ongoing battle with cancer ended his productive life in September 1996. But Ted's recollections and writings on the growth of the ESW certainly still give its present members, and those to come, a sense of their organization's unique history and purpose. As fellow ESW members representing three generations of entomologists who knew and worked with Ted, we offer some personal remembrances of him, followed by a list of his published contributions to the science and history of entomology.

#### REMINISCENCES OF TED SPILMAN

by John M. Kingsolver

Theodore J. Spilman died September 22, 1996 at 71 years of age. He and I worked together for 23 years in our positions with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C., and were the closest of friends. My first meeting with Ted was in March, 1960, while I was on a type-study trip to eastern museums. He and Rose Ella Spilman (then Warner) helped me find the type specimens I needed to see. By 1962, when I joined the U.S. Department of Agriculture staff at the National Museum, Ted and Rose Ella were married. The three of

us were part of a group of seven USDA and two Smithsonian Coleopterists with offices in the National Museum, although entomological offices and the insect collection were then housed temporarily in a building on Lamont St. north of the main museum. We were a congenial group although our respective institutional duties were somewhat divergent. The USDA "crew" included Donald Anderson, George Vogt, Ted, Rose Ella and myself, whereas the SI group consisted of Oscar Cartwright and Paul Spangler. Later, Robert Gordon and Richard White joined the USDA group and Terry Erwin the SI group.

Of course, I picked brains to learn procedures, and everyone on both staffs was helpful. Ted and I became near "brothers" after we learned that he was one day older than I. This led to joint birthday celebrations in March for as long as we were associated. Several years later, I discovered that one of my ancestors was named Spilman. Although Ted tried desperately, he could never connect our family lines.

Ted was well liked by everyone. He had a thorough knowledge of the darkling beetle family, the click beetles, and several other smaller coleopterous families. He didn't publish many large papers but seemed fated to put out small emergency fires that constantly cropped up in agricultural entomology. His papers were meticulous, practical, and useful. He was well-read in the arts and the classics, and had a considerable library at home.

Ted was very professional, usually wearing a lab coat or jacket and tie whereas some of the others of us dressed more casually. He was especially at home with visitors to the museum, helping them to find specimens in the collection, and making certain that they had everything they needed during their visit.

For several reasons, Ted and Rose Ella and my wife and I seldom socialized. We had children in school, my wife worked evenings in a hospital, and opportunities for visiting were scarce. One series of social

gatherings thrived for several years in the 1960's. Several couples and singles from both the USDA and Smithsonian staffs formed a loosely organized group to meet and read plays. Parts would be assigned ahead of time, and we would meet in a member's home where the plays would be read but not acted out. Refreshments would be furnished by the hosts to round out the evening.

Ted often came to work at the museum after his retirement in 1985 although the last few years of his life he was seriously ill. I last spoke with him shortly before he died.

R. J. Gagne (1997, *American Entomologist* 43 (3):191–192) wrote a fine obituary for Ted and listed his vital statistics and many accomplishments, especially of his association with the Entomological Society of Washington.

#### TED SPILMAN, FRIEND

by Ross H. Arnett, Jr.

I first met Ted when I returned to Cornell for a short visit soon after I went to work at the U.S. National Museum. V. S. L. Pate told me that a friend of his had a former student at the University of Louisville, now registered at Cornell, who wanted to do graduate work on beetle taxonomy. Pate wanted me to meet him. When I was in Comstock Hall that morning, Ted was in class, so I didn't get to meet him there. I drove to College Town and was parking the car to get some lunch when this young fellow ran up to the car and said: "You are Ross Arnett?" "Yes." "I am Ted Spilman and I want to work on Pythidae!"

Thus began a close friendship that lasted the rest of our lives. We were in close touch both entomologically and personally in so many ways. When I left the Museum to teach, Ted took over my job, and the groups of beetles I was working on. As I wrote the "beetle book" Ted helped in so many unacknowledged ways. He looked up things for me. He found specimens for me. He

criticized (most valuable). As everyone knows who has tried to do a big piece of work, without friends of the caliber of Ted, they never would complete their project.

When I moved back to Washington to teach I had no place to live until we sold our house in Rochester. Ted put me up in his apartment (this was before the days of Rose Ella). I slept on a "hide-a-bed" in the living room. My head was near a fish tank. During the night the fish clicked their gills (courtship sounds?). Ted didn't believe me. I don't know if he ever found out about his talking fish.

We sold our house up north. Ted and I went house hunting in Bladensburg. One day coming back from such a trip, Ted had an accident with his Studebaker. No one was hurt, but the front of the car was a mess. Ted never got it fixed. He drove it for quite awhile, and then traded it off. Ted and I picked out a house which my wife Mary and the children never saw until the day we moved in.

Ted took the job in Washington before he finished his doctoral thesis and took his orals at Cornell. I suggested that he finish his degree at Catholic University of America under my direction. He did register for a semester as a graduate student, but he was much too busy at the museum to bother with the trivial academic hurdles on a campus across town, so finishing the degree was always put aside for something more important—his research. Therefore, he remained "Mr." Spilman, but in our minds he was "Doctor."

Then came Rose Ella Warner. Ted and Rosa Ella were made for each other. It was my distinct honor and pleasure to be Ted's best man at their wedding. Nothing between close friends can ever be as wonderful as having this role in the ceremony of the Holy Matrimony. I offered the toast the best man is supposed to do, not very elegant, I am afraid, but I wished them a happy married life, and it was to the very last.

No matter where I moved, Ted was always back there at the USNM (entomolog-



ical Mecca) willing to answer questions, send specimens, and help in every way I asked. He called me a few days before he died to say good-bye. I said "Good-bye, dear friend."

TED SPILMAN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO  
ENTOMOLOGY

by Warren E. Steiner, Jr.

The wide range of entomological topics that attracted Ted Spilman's interest, paired with his cordial willingness to share his findings with others, made him a great resource to the research community at all levels. In the late 1970s when I was at the National Museum as a student and contract technician, I first got to know Ted and found him to be a living encyclopedia. Being able to tap this irreplaceable source of information, then simply chat about topics of mutual interest, was then a real help to a beginning student, and is now truly missed.

I often relied on Ted for a quick identification, or help in finding references on a particular beetle or natural history topic. Because so many unrelated beetle taxa were the subjects of his research over the years, primarily the tenebrionoid families but also Ptinidae, Bostrichidae, Elateridae, Cerambycidae, and the odd little "jumping shore beetles" (intertidal Limnichidae), asking Ted was much faster (and more entertaining) than searching the library.

Fieldwork was not a major part of Ted's entomological career, but he did travel to Dominica for about 3 months in 1964 to participate in the Bredin-Archbold-Smithsonian biological survey of the island, where he made some significant collections. Most of his collecting and work on rearing of larval beetles was centered in the eastern U.S. where he helped show me that, when it came to knowledge of beetles, the backyard was frontier. He and I made at least two local field trips in the early 1980s in search of new finds—we picked at polypore fungi along the Potomac, sorted through

sand of Delaware dunes, salvaged drowned specimens from the beach drift line, and had a good time trading trivia. But we turned back at Assateague Island when, to our dismay, we unknowingly had chosen the day of the annual wild pony roundup for our visit. Glamorous megafauna had overwhelmed entomology once more, but my adaptable travel partner was equally happy to find a camp along the Pocomoke, where the mosquitoes are at least smaller than those at the beach.

Ted's research products are a complex quilt of subject matter. Without hesitation he can be called a coleopterist. Fossil beetles, beetles of medical importance, cave beetles, morphology of beetle genitalia, beetles in mammal nests, introduction of foreign beetles, beetle nomenclature, rearing the larvae and pupae of beetles, the lives (and even grave sites) of people who studied beetles, were among his topics addressed. His curatorial and identification responsibilities covered several of the largest families of beetles and many unrelated smaller groups. He liked island faunas and was keeping and building separate survey collections of West Indian and Hawaiian Tenebrionidae. He seemed to enjoy solving complex nomenclatural problems, and in several papers, delved into the definition of terms and usage of names. The odd and atypical attracted his attention—he even named a beetle species "extraordinaria."

The diversity of subjects was equally broad when it came to the books that Ted reviewed. These included systematic revisions, catalogs, identification manuals, treatments of biology, morphology, and agricultural importance of insects, and biographies of entomologists. His reviews are still useful and amusing to read—he talks frankly and informally about any shortcomings and yet gives the book a good sell, often with humorous flair. It is obvious that he enjoyed reading and commenting on the writings of others, including works by colleagues, and he sometimes published the same review in two or more places.

Ted was a long-time member of the Coleopterists' Society and served as Editor of the Coleopterists' Bulletin for five years, succeeding Ross Arnett in 1962. With his writing style and acute command of taxonomic principles, terms and literature, he was an excellent and dependable reviewer of manuscripts. Alas, production of some taxonomic works surely must have been set back because of his loyal service to others in many ways and his constant attention to many duties on the job.

A lot of Ted's research pursuits went unfinished, but he leaves behind a wealth of information for the next students of these special topics, in the form of literature collections and notes, card files, manuscripts in progress, copies of correspondence with colleagues, and identified specimens. His sixty published works (not including book reviews) listed below are only the tip of a great iceberg of accomplishments—Ted's separate files on research topics, grouped by subject and by taxon, will be most useful and unique products of his labors. These will perpetuate his contributions to the science, as will the professional example he set for all of us and the generations to follow.

#### Publications by T. J. Spilman

- 1952a. The male genitalia of the Nearctic Salpingidae. *Coleopt. Bull.* 6(1): 9–13.
- 1952b. Dragonfly oviposition. *The Kentucky Naturalist* 6(1): 15.
- 1953a. An odd case of gynandromorphism in the external genitalia of *Boros discicollis* (Salpingidae). *Coleopt. Bull.* 7(5): 41–44.
- 1953b. Corrections to Leng's catalogue and Gebien's Coleopterorum Catalogus: Tenebrionidae and Katalog der Tenebrioniden. *J. New York Ent. Soc.* 61: 215–216.
1954. Generic names of the Salpingidae and their type species (Coleoptera). *J. Washington Acad. Sci.* 44(3): 85–94.
1958. The transfer of *Anamphidora* from the Tenebrionidae to the Alleculidae (Coleoptera). *Proc. Ent. Soc. Washington* 60(6): 288.
- 1959a. Notes on *Edrotes*, *Leichenun*, *Palorus*, *Euprosophulus*, *Adelium*, and *Strongylium* (Tenebrionidae). *Coleopt. Bull.* 13: 58–64.
- 1959b. A study of the Thaumastodinae, with one new genus and two new species (Limnichidae). *Coleopt. Bull.* 13: 111–122.
- 1960a. The tenebrionid *Diaclina fagi* as medicine in the Orient. *Coleopt. Bull.* 14(1): 12.
- 1960b. *Ptinus variegatus* Rossi, new to the United States (Coleoptera: Ptinidae). *Proc. Ent. Soc. Washington* 62(2): 103–104.
- 1960c. Some synonymy in *Oryzaephilus* (Coleoptera: Cucujidae). *Proc. Ent. Soc. Washington* 62(4): 251.
- 1961a. Remarks on the classification and nomenclature of the American tenebrionine genus *Adelonia* (Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae). *Pan-Pac. Ent.* 37(1): 49–51.
- 1961b. On the immature stages of the Ptilodactylidae (Coleoptera). *Ent. News* 72(5): 105–107.
- 1961c. (with W. H. Anderson). On the immature stages of North American Pyrochroidae (Coleoptera). *Coleopt. Bull.* 15(2): 38–40.
- 1961d. A few tenebrionids new to Cuba. *Coleopt. Bull.* 15(4): 127.
- 1961e. *Uloma extraordinaria*, a new species from Cuba (Tenebrionidae). *Coleopt. Bull.* 15(4): 113–115.
- 1962a. A few rearrangements in the Tenebrionidae, with a key to the genera of the Ulomini and Tenebrionini of America, north of Mexico (Coleoptera). *Coleopt. Bull.* 16: 57–63.
- 1962b. The New World genus *Centronopus*, with new generic synonymy and a new species (Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae). *Trans. Amer. Ent. Soc.* 88: 1–19.
- 1963a. The American genus *Mycotrogus*: A synopsis, a new species from Cuba, and a note on a larva (Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae). *Proc. Ent. Soc. Washington* 65(1): 21–30.
- 1963b. On larvae, probably *Tauroceras*, from the Neotropics (Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae). *Coleopt. Bull.* 17: 58–64.
1965. *Ptinus variegatus* in Georgia and Kentucky (Coleoptera: Ptinidae). *Proc. Ent. Soc. Washington* 67(4): 230.
- 1966a. On the generic names *Alphitobius*, *Plthora*, *Clamoris*, and *Cataphronetis* (Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae). *Proc. Ent. Soc. Washington* 68(1): 6–10.
- 1966b. Larva and pupa of *Amarygmus morio* from Hawaii (Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae). *Proc. Hawaiian Ent. Soc.* 19(2): 297–301.
- 1966c. A new species of *Martinius* from Cuba (Coleoptera: Limnichidae). *Coleopt. Bull.* 20(4): 123–125.
- 1967a. A new North American Ulomine genus and species, *Doliodesmus charlesi* (Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae). *Pan-Pac. Ent.* 43(2): 149–154.
- 1967b. Gmelin's 13th Edition of the Systema Naturae: A case of neglect. *Ent. News* 78(7): 169–172.
- 1967c. The heteromorous intertidal beetles (Coleoptera: Salpingidae: Aegialitinae). *Pac. Ins.* 9(1): 1–21.

1968. Two new species of *Niptus* from North American caves (Coleoptera: Ptinidae). *Southw. Nat.* 13(2): 193–200.
1969. Larva and pupa of *Pyanisia tristis* from Alabama (Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae). *Coleopt. Bull.* 23(3): 57–61.
1970. A new species of *Tribolium* from North America. The results of past confusion. U.S. Dept. Agr. Coop. Econ. Ins. Rpt. 20(24): 396.
- 1971a. Bredin-Archbold-Smithsonian Biological Survey of Dominica: Bostrichidae, Inopeplidae, Lagriidae, Lyctidae, Lymexylonidae, Melandryidae, Monommidae, Rhipiceridae, and Rhipiphoridae (Coleoptera). *Smithsonian Contr. Zool.* 70: 1–10.
- 1971b. The longitudinal lines on beetle elytra: A definition of stria. *Coleopt. Bull.* 25(4): 121–122.
- 1972a. Fossil *Stichtoptychus* and *Cryptorama* in Mexican amber (Coleoptera: Anobiidae). *Univ. Calif. Publs. Ent.* 63: 87–89.
- 1972b. A new genus and species of jumping shore beetle from Mexico (Coleoptera: Limnichidae). *Pan-Pac. Ent.* 40(2): 108–115.
- 1972c. *Uloma* Dejean, 1821 (Insecta: Coleoptera): Proposed designation of a type-species under the plenary powers. *Z.N.(S)* 1979. *Bull. Zool. Nomencl.* 29(1): 32–34.
- 1972d. An amendment to the proposal concerning *Uloma* (Insecta: Coleoptera). *Z.N.(S)* 1979. *Bull. Zool. Nomencl.* 29(4): 194–195.
- 1973a. A list of the Tenebrionidae of Michigan (Coleoptera). *Great Lakes Ent.* 6(3): 85–91.
- 1973b. Nomenclatural problems in six genera of Tenebrionidae (Coleoptera). *Proc. Ent. Soc. Washington* 75(1): 39–44.
- 1973c. (with C. A. Triplehorn). A review of *Strongylium* of America north of Mexico, with descriptions of two new species (Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae). *Trans. Amer. Ent. Soc.* 99(1): 1–27.
1974. *Temnocerus* and *Heterolabus*, a new synonymy (Coleoptera: Curculionidae). *Proc. Ent. Soc. Washington* 76(3): 246.
- 1976a. A new species of fossil *Ptinus* from fossil wood rat nests in California and Arizona (Coleoptera: Ptinidae), with a postscript on the definition of a fossil. *Coleopt. Bull.* 30(3): 239–244.
- 1976b. (With J. D. Solomon and R. E. Doolittle). Cerambycid beetles captured in sticky-traps in Mississippi. *Coleopt. Bull.* 30(3): 289–290.
- 1978a. *Lagria villosa* in Brazil, with new descriptions and illustrations of the larva and pupa (Coleoptera: Lagriidae). *Ciencia e Cultura* 30(3): 342–347.
- 1978b. Descriptions of the larva, pupa, and adult of *Alegoria dilatata*, associated with banana plants in the Neotropics (Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae). U.S. Dept. Agr. Coop. Plant Pest Rpt. 3(6): 47–51.
- 1978c. Pests not known to occur in the United States or of limited distribution: Lined click beetle, *Agriotes lineatus* (L.); a wireworm, *Agriotes obscurus* (L.); a wireworm, *Agriotes sputator* (L.). U.S. Dept. Agr. Coop. Plant Pest Rpt. 3(48–52): 731–734.
- 1978d. (with R. E. Woodruff and E. J. Gerberg). A false powderpost beetle new to the United States (Coleoptera: Bostrichidae). *Fla. Dept. Agr. Cons. Serv. Div. Plant Ind., Entomology Circular* 195, 2 pp.
- 1979a. (with E. J. Ford, Jr.). Biology and immature stages of *Dirrhagofarsus lewisi*, a species new to the United States (Coleoptera: Eucnemidae). *Coleopt. Bull.* 33(1): 75–83.
- 1979b. Larvae and pupae of *Centronopus calcaratus* and *Centronopus supressus* (Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae), with an essay on wing development in pupae. *Proc. Ent. Soc. Washington* 81(4): 513–521.
1980. (with P. G. Crook and J. A. Novak). The lesser mealworm, *Alphitobius diaperinus*, in the scrotum of *Rattus norvegicus*, with notes on other vertebrate associations (Coleoptera, Tenebrionidae; Rodentia, Muridae). *Coleopt. Bull.* 34(4): 393–396.
1982. False powderpost beetles of the genus *Dinoderus* in North America (Coleoptera: Bostrichidae). *Coleopt. Bull.* 36(2): 193–196.
1983. (with V. F. Wright). An annotated bibliography on *Prostephanus truncatus* (Horn), (Coleoptera: Bostrichidae): A pest of stored grain. *Trop. Stored Prod. Inf.* 46: 25–30.
- 1984a. Vignettes of 100 years of the Entomological Society of Washington. *Proc. Ent. Soc. Washington* 86(1): 1–10.
- 1984b. Identification of larvae and pupae of the larger grain borer, *Prostephanus truncatus* (Coleoptera, Bostrichidae), and the larger black flour beetle, *Cynaues angustus* (Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae). *Proc. Third Intl. Working Conf. Stored-Product Ent.* 44–53.
1985. Review of *Laelater* of North America (Coleoptera: Elateridae). *Insecta Mundi* 1(1): 1–12.
- 1989a. A visit to the tomb of Thomas Say in New Harmony, Indiana. *Ent. News* 100(5): 224–227.
- 1989b. Vignettes of the Presidents of the Entomological Society of America, 1889–1989. *Bull. Ent. Soc. Amer.* 35(3): 33–65.
- 1991a. (with J. F. Lawrence). Tenebrionidae (Tenebrionoidea) (including Alleculidae, Cossyphodidae, Lagriidae, Nilionidae, Rhysoपाussidae, Tentyriidae), pp. 520–528. *In* Stehr, F. W., ed., *Immature Insects*. Kendall-Hunt, Dubuque, Iowa.
- 1991b. (In Gorham, J. R., *Insect and mite pests in food*) Part 1.6. Spider beetles (Ptinidae, Coleoptera). U.S. Dept. Agr. Handbook 655(1): 137–147.
- 1991c. (In Gorham, J. R., *Insect and mite pests in food*) Part 1.11. Darkling beetles (Tenebrionidae, Coleoptera). U.S. Dept. Agr. Handbook 655(1): 185–214.
1995. (with R. L. Aalbu and K. W. Brown). The systematic status of *Amblycyphrus asperatus*, *Threnus niger*, *Pycnomorpha californica*, *Emmenastus*

*rugosus*, and *Biomorphus tuberculatus* Motschulsky (Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae). Proc. Ent. Soc. Washington 97(3): 481-488.

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